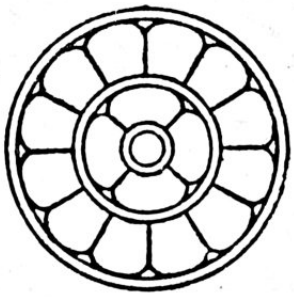
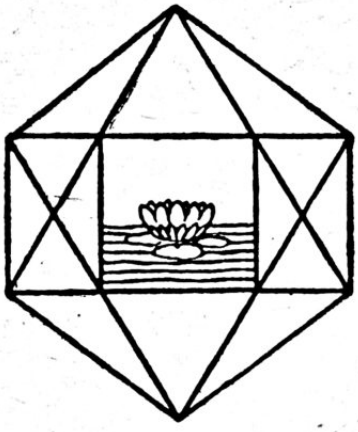
# ALL INDIA MAGAZINE

November 1972



*Sri Aurobindo came on earth from the Supreme to announce the manifestation of a new race and the new world, the Supramental. Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.*

*The Mother*



# All India Magazine

—Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.

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It has often been said that India has some very special role to play for the future of humanity on earth as her specific contribution to the world which is to prepare itself for a great and glorious age to come. Obviously India can play that role by first being herself so that she discovers her soul and lives by it in order to be able to serve by her strength and inspiration the humanity at large. This self-discovery is tantamount to finding the foundamentals of her culture, her philosophy and her values.

Sri Aurobindo has revealed to us the truth of Indian Culture with her great philosophy and sustained ideals. He has brought to light the secrets of this great and enduring culture, the inspirations of her spiritually oriented civilization, polity, social order, art and literature, painting and sculpture and architecture, drama and poetry, dance and music, philosophy and religion, ethics and morality and all the preoccupations of her life. This spirit-inspired and spirit-oriented culture of India deserves the attention of all those who wish to work as true Indians for the future of humanity as also those who wish to have a clear and deep understanding of what the great cultural heritage of India is.

The present issue of the AIM proposes to offer to its readers certain passages from Sri Aurobindo's *Foundations Of Indian Culture* in which they may have some glimpses of India's great past having the promise of a greater future.

*The Editor*

# PRAYER AND MEDITATION

The only thing important is the goal to be attained; the way matters little, and often it is preferable to know it in advance. But what we must know, is if truly the moment of the divine action upon earth has come, and if the work conceived in the depths can be realised.

Of that, O Lord, Thou hast given us assurance, an assurance which has been accompanied by the most powerful promise which Nature, the universal Consciousness, can ever make... We have, therefore, the certitude that what has to be done will be done, and that our present individual being is really called upon to collaborate in this glorious victory, in this new manifestation. What more must we know? Nothing. Is it not with the greatest confidence that we can look upon the formidable fight, the mass of adverse forces which, without knowing it, serve eventually the realisation of Thy plan? It would be wrong on our part to be disquieted because it is not given to us to know how it serves Thy plan, and by what means Thou wilt triumph over all resistance; for Thy triumph is so perfect that every obstacle, every ill-will, every hatred rising against Thee is a promise of a vaster and still completer victory.

By the sum of the resistance one can measure the scope Thou wouldst give to the action of so much of Thy pure forces as are coming to be manifested upon the

earth. What opposes is precisely that on which it is the mission of these forces to act; it is the darkest hatred which must be touched and transformed into luminous peace.

If the human individual whom Thou hast chosen as Thy centre of action and Thy intermediary meets with few obstacles, little misunderstanding and hatred, it would mean that the mission Thou hast entrusted to it is limited and of no great intensity. It is in the narrow circle of a goodwill already prepared that he will act and not on the mass of the chaotic and confused terrestrial substance.

O divine Master, let all of us share this knowledge which Thou hast given me, so that the peace of conviction may reign in our hearts; and that we may, in the calm of Thy sovereign certitude, face, with our heads held high, all that, unconsciously attracted towards the transfiguration, precipitates itself into a blind ignorance, thinking that it will be able to destroy the Transfiguring Love.

*The Mother*

# INDIAN CONCEPTION OF LIFE

The peculiarity of the Indian eye of thought is that it looks through the form, looks even through the force, and searches for the spirit in things everywhere. The peculiarity of the Indian will in life is that it feels itself to be unfulfilled, not in touch with perfection, not permanently justified in any intermediate satisfaction if it has not found and does not live in the truth of the spirit. The Indian idea of the world, of Nature and of existence is not physical, but psychological and spiritual. Spirit, soul, consciousness are not only greater than inert matter and inconscient force, but they precede and originate these lesser things. All force is power, or means of a secret spirit; the force that sustains the world is a conscious Will and Nature is its machinery of executive power. Matter is the body or field of a consciousness hidden within it, the material universe a form and movement of the Spirit. Man himself is not a life and mind born of Matter and eternally subject to physical Nature, but a spirit that uses life and body. It is an understanding faith in this conception of existence, it is the attempt to live it out, it is the science and practice of this high endeavour, and it is the aspiration to break out in the end from this mind bound to life and matter into a greater spiritual consciousness that is the innermost sense of Indian culture. It is this that constitutes the much talked

of Indian spirituality. It is evidently very remote from the dominant European idea ; it is different even from the form given by Europe to the Christian conception of life. But it does not mean at all that the Indian culture concedes no reality to life, follows no material or vital aims and satisfactions, or cares to do nothing for our actual human existence. It cannot truly be contended that a conception of this kind can give no powerful and inspiring motive to the human effort of man. Certainly, in this view, matter, mind, life, reason, form are only powers of the spirit and valuable not for their own sake, but because of the Spirit within them, *Ātmārtham ;* they exist for the sake of the Self, says the Upanishad, and this is certainly the Indian attitude to these things. But that does not depreciate them or deprive them of their value ; on the contrary it increases a hundredfold their significance. Form and body immensely increase in importance if they are felt to be instinct with the life of the Spirit and are conceived as a support for the rhythm of its workings. And human life was in ancient Indian thought no vile and unworthy existence ; it is the greatest thing known to us; it is desired, the Purana boldly says, even by the gods in heaven. The deepening and raising of the riches or the most potent energies of our minds, our hearts, our life-power, our bodies are all means by which the spirit can proceed to self-discovery and the return to

its own infinite freedom and power. For when mind and heart and reason heighten to their greatest lights and powers, they bring embodied life to the point where it can open to a still greater light and power beyond them; the individual mind widens into a vast universal consciousness and lifts towards a high spiritual transcendence. These are at least no sterilising and depressing ideas; they exalt the life of man and make something like godhead its logical outcome.

The dignity given to human existence by the Vedantic thought and by the thought of the classical ages of Indian culture exceeded anything conceived by the western idea of humanity. Man in the West has always been only an ephemeral creature of Nature or a soul manufactured at birth by an arbitrary breath of the whimsical Creator and set under impossible conditions to get salvation, but far more likely to be thrown away into the burning refuse-heap of Hell as a hopeless failure. At best he is exalted by a reasoning mind and will and an effort to be better than God or Nature made him. Far more ennobling, inspiring, filled with the motive-force of a great idea is the conception placed before us by Indian culture. Man in the Indian idea is a spirit veiled in the works of energy, moving to self-discovery, capable of Godhead. He is a soul that is growing through Nature to conscious self-hood; he is a divinity and an eternal existence; he is an ever-flowing

wave of the God-ocean, an inextinguishable spark of the supreme Fire. Even, he is in his uttermost reality identical with the ineffable Transcendence from which he came and greater than the godheads whom he worships. The natural half-animal creature that for a while he seems to be is not at all his whole being and is not in any way his real being. His inmost reality is the divine Self or at least one dynamic eternal portion of it, and to find that and exceed his outward, apparent, natural self is the greatness of which he alone of terrestrial beings is capable. He has the spiritual capacity to pass to a supreme and extraordinary pitch of manhood and that is the first aim which is proposed to him by Indian culture. Living no more in the first crude type of an undeveloped humanity to which most men still belong, *na yathā prākṛto janaḥ,* he can even become a free perfected semi-divine man, *mukta, siddha.* But he can do more; released into the cosmic consciousness, his spirit can become one with God, one self with the Spirit of the universe or rise into a Light and Vastness that transcends the universe; his nature can become one dynamic power with universal Nature or one Light with a transcendental Gnosis. To be shut up for ever in his ego is not his ultimate perfection; he can become a universal soul, one with the supreme Unity, one with others, one with all beings. This is the high sense and power concealed in his humanity that he

can aspire to this perfection and transcendence. And he can arrive at it through any or all of his natural powers if they will accept release, through his mind and reason and thought and their illuminations, through his heart and its unlimited power of love and sympathy, through his will and its dynamic drive towards mastery and right action, through his ethical nature and its hunger for the universal Good, through his aesthetic sense and its seekings after delight and beauty, or through his inner soul and its power of absolute spiritual calm, wideness, joy and peace.

This is the sense of that spiritual liberation and perfection of which Indian thought and inner discipline have been full since the earliest Vedic times. However high and arduous this aim may be it has always seemed to it possible and even in a way near and normal, once spiritual realisation has discovered its path. The positivist Western mind finds it difficult to give this conception the rank of a living and intelligible idea. The status of the *siddha, bhāgavata, mukta* appears to it a baseless chimera. It seems to its Christian associations a blasphemy against the solitary greatness of God, before whom man is only a grovelling worm, to its fierce attachment to the normal ego a negation of personality and a repellent menace, to its earth-bound rationalism a dream, a self-hypnotic hallucination or a deluding mania. And yet in ancient

Europe the Stoics, Platonists, Pythagoreans had made some approach to this aspiration, and even afterwards, a few rare souls have envisaged or pursued it through occult ways. And now it is again beginning to percolate into the Western imagination, but less as a dynamic life-motive than in poetry and in certain aspects of general thought or through movements like Theosophy that draw from ancient and oriental sources. Science and Philosophy and religion still regard it with scorn as an illusion, with indifference as a dream or with condemnation as a heathen arrogance. It is the distinction of Indian culture to have seized on this great dynamic hope, to have kept it a living and practicable thing and to have searched out all the possible paths to this spiritual way of perfect existence. Indian thought has made this great thing the common highest aim and universal spiritual destiny of the soul that is in every human creature.

The value of the Indian conception for life must depend on the relations and gradations by which it connects this difficult and distant perfection with our normal living and present everyday nature. Put over against the latter without any connection or any gradations that lead up to it and make it possible, it would either be a high unattainable ideal or the detached remote passion of a few exceptional spirits. Or even it would discourage the springs of our natural life by the too great contrast between the spiritual

being and our own poor imperfect nature. Something of the kind has happened in later times; the current Western impression about the exaggerated asceticism and other-wordliness of Indian religion and philosophy is founded on the growing gulf created by a later thought between man's spiritual possibilities and his terrestrial status. But we must not be misled by extreme tendencies or the overemphasis put upon them in a period of decline. If we would get at the real meaning of the Indian idea of life, we must go back to its best times. And we must not look at this or that school of philosophy or at some side of it as the whole of Indian thought; the totality of the ancient philosophical thinking, religion, literature, art, society must be our ground of enquiry. The Indian conception in its early soundness made no such mistake as to imagine that this great thing can or even ought to be done by some violent, intolerant, immediate leap from one pole of existence to its opposite. Even the most extreme philosophies do not go so far. The workings of the Spirit in the universe were a reality to one side of the Indian mind, to another only a half reality, a self-descriptive Lila or illusory Maya. To the one the world was an action of the Infinite Energy, Shakti, to the other a figment of some secondary paradoxical consciousness in the Eternal, Maya : but life as an intermediate reality was never denied by any school of Indian thinking. Indian thought recognised that the normal

life of man has to be passed through with a conscientious endeavour to fulfil its purpose : its powers must be developed with knowledge; its forms must be persued, interpreted and fathomed; its values must be worked out, possessed and lived; its enjoyments must be fully taken on their own level. Only afterwards can we go on to self-existence or a supra-existence. The spiritual perfection which opens before man is the crown of a long, patient, millennial outflowering of the spirit in life and nature. This belief in a gradual spiritual progress and evolution here is indeed the secret of the almost universal Indian acceptance of the truth of reincarnation. It is only by millions of lives in inferior forms that the secret soul in the universe, conscious even in the inconscient, *cetanaḥ acetaneṣu* has arrived at humanity: it is only by hundreds or thousands, perhaps even millions of human lives that man can grow into his divine self-existence. Every life is a step which he can take backward or forward; his action in life, his will in life, his thought and knowledge by which he governs and directs his life, determine what he is yet to be from the earliest stages to the last transcendence. *Yathā karma yathā śrutam.*

# THE IDEA OF DHARMA

The idea of the Dharma is, next to the idea of the Infinite, its major chord; Dharma, next to spirit, is its foundation of life. There is no ethical idea which it has not stressed, put in its most ideal and imperative form, enforced by teaching, injunction, parable, artistic creation, formative examples. Truth, honour, loyalty, fidelity, courage, chastity, love, long-suffering, self-sacrifice, harmlessness, forgiveness, compassion, benevolence, beneficence are its common themes, are in its view the very stuff of a right human life, the essence of man's Dharma. Buddism with its high and noble ethics, Jainism with its austere ideal of self-conquest, Hinduism with its magnificent examples of all sides of the Dharma are not inferior in ethical teaching and practice to any religion or system, but rather take the highest rank and have had the strongest effective force. For the practice of these virtues in older times there is abundant internal and foreign evidence. A considerable stamp of them still remains in spite of much degeneracy even though there has been some depression of the manlier qualities which only flourish in their fullest power on the soil of freedom. The legend to the contrary began in the minds of English scholars with a Christian bias who were misled by the stress which Indian philosophy lays on knowledge rather than works as the means of salvation. For

they did not note or could not grasp the meaning of the rule well-known to all Indian spiritual seekers that a pure sattwic mind and life are presupposed as the first step towards the divine knowledge—the doers of evil find me not, says the Gita. And they were unable to realise that knowledge of the truth means for Indian thought not intellectual assent or recognition, but a new consciousness and a life according to the truth of the Spirit. Morality is for the Western mind mostly a thing of outward conduct; but conduct for the Indian mind is only one means of expression and sign of a soul-state. Hinduism only incidentally strings together a number of commandments for observance, a table of moral laws; more deeply it enjoins a spiritual or ethical purity of the mind with action as one outward index. It says strongly enough, almost too strongly, "Thou shouldst not kill," but insists more firmly on the injunction, "Thou shalt not hate, thou shalt not yield to greed, anger or malice," for these are the roots of killing. And Hinduism admits relative standards, a wisdom too hard for the European intelligence. Non-injuring is the very highest of its laws, *Ahiṁsā pāramo dharmaḥ;* still it does not lay it down as a physical rule for the warrior, but insistently demands from him mercy, chivalry, respect for the non-belligerent, the weak, the unarmed, the vanquished, the prisoner, the wounded, the fugitive, and so escapes the unpracticality of a too absolutist rule for all life.

# LIFE VALUE OF A CULTURE

There are three powers that we must grasp in order to judge the life-value of the culture. There is first, the power of its original conception of life; there is, next, the power of the forms, types and rhythms it has given to life; there is, last, the inspiration, the vigour, the force of vital execution of its motives manifested in the actual lives of men and of the community that flourishes under its influence. The European conception of life is a thing with which we in India are now very familiar, because our present thought and effort are obscured with its shadow when they are not filled with its presence. For we have been trying hard to assimilate something of it, even to shape ourselves, and especially our political, economic and outward conduct into some imitation of its forms and rhythms. The European idea is the conception of a Force that manifests itself in the material universe and a Life in it of which man is almost the only discoverable meaning. This anthropocentric view of things has not been altered by the recent stress of Science on the vast blank inanities of an inconscient mechanical Nature. And in man, thus unique in the inner drift of Nature, the whole effort of Life is to arrive at some light and harmony of the understanding and ordering reason, some efficient rational power, adorning beauty, strong utility, vital enjoyment, economic welfare. The free power of the

individual ego, the organised will of the corporate ego, these are the great needed forces. The development of individual personality and an organised efficient national life are the two things that matter in the European ideal. These two powers have grown, striven, run riot at times, and the restless and often violent vividness of the historic stir and the literary and artistic vivacity of Europe are due to their powerful colours. The enjoyment of life and force, the gallop of egoistic passion and vital satisfaction are a loud and insistent strain, a constant high-voiced motive. Against them is another opposite effort, the endeavour to govern by reason, science, ethics, art; a restraining and harmonising utility is here the foremost motive. At different times different powers have taken the lead. Christian religiosity too has come in and added new tones, modified some tendencies, deepened others. Each age and period has increased the wealth of contributory lines and forces and helped the complexity and largeness of the total conception. At present the sense of the corporate life dominates and it is served by the idea of a great intellectual and material progress, an ameliorated political and social state governed by science. There is an ideal of intelligent utility, liberty and equality or else an ideal of stringent organisation and efficiency and a perfectly mobilised, carefully marshalled uniting of forces in a ceaseless pull towards the general welfare. This endeavour of Europe has be-

come terribly outward and mechanical in its appearance; but some renewed power of a more humanistic idea is trying to beat its way in again and man may perhaps before long refuse to be tied on the wheel of his own triumphant machinery and conquered by his apparatus. At any rate we need not lay too much emphasis on what may be a passing phase. The broad permanent European conception of life remains and it is in its own limits a great and invigorating conception,—imperfect, narrow at the top, shut in under a heavy lid, poor in its horizons, too much of the soil, but still with a sense in it that is strenuous and noble.

# INDIAN IDEA OF DHARMA

The universal embracing dharma in the Indian idea is a law of ideal perfection for the developing mind and soul of man; it compels him to grow in the power and force of certain high or large universal qualities which in their harmony build a highest type of manhood. In Indian thought and life this was the ideal of the best, the law of the good or noble man, the discipline laid down for the self-perfecting individual, *ārya, śreṣṭha, sajjana, sādhu.* This ideal was not a purely moral or ethical conception, although that element might predominate; it was also intellectual, religious, social, aesthetic, the flowering of the whole ideal man, the perfection of the total human nature. The most varied qualities met in the Indian conception of the best, *śreṣṭha,* the good and noble man, *ārya.* In the heart benevolence, beneficence, love, compassion, altruism, long-suffering, liberality, kindliness, patience; in the character courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience and reverance where these were due, but power too to govern and direct, a fine modesty and yet a strong independence and noble pride; in the mind wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, knowledge of all the best thought, an openness to poetry, art and beauty, an educated capacity and skill in works; in the inner being a strong religious

sense, piety, love of God, seeking after the Highest, the spiritual turn; in social relations and conduct a strict observance of all the social dharmas, as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler or subject, master or servant, priest or warrior or worker, king or sage, member of clan or caste; this was the total ideal of the Arya, the man of high upbringing and noble nature. The ideal is clearly portrayed in the written records of ancient India during two millenniums and it is the very life-breath of Hindu ethics. It was the creation of an at once ideal and rational mind, spirit-wise and worldly-wise, deeply religious, nobly ethical, firmly yet flexibly intellectual, scientific and aesthetic, patient and tolerant of life's difficulties and human weakness, but arduous in self-discipline. This was the mind that was at the base of the Indian civilisation and gave its characteristic stamp to all the culture.

But even this was only the foundation and preparation for another highest thing which by its presence exalts human life beyond itself into something spiritual and divine. Indian culture raised the crude animal life of desire, self-interest and satisfied propensity beyond its first intention to a noble self-exceeding and shapeliness by infusing into it the order and high aims of the Dharma. But its profounder characteristic aim—and in this it was unique—was to raise this nobler life too of the self-perfecting human being beyond its own inten-

tion to a mightiest self-exceeding and freedom; it laboured to infuse into it the great aim of spiritual liberation and perfection, *mukti*, *mokṣa*. The Law and its observance are neither the beginning nor the end of man; there is beyond the field of the law a larger realm of consciousness in which, climbing, he emerges into a great spiritual freedom. Not a noble but ever death-bound manhood is the highest height of man's perfection: immortality, freedom, divinity are within his grasp. Ancient Indian culture held this highest aim constantly before the inner eye of the soul and insistently inspired with its prospect and light the whole conception of existence. The entire life of the individual was ennobled by this aim, the whole ordering of society was cast into a scale of graduated ascension towards this supreme summit.

A well-governed system of the individual and communal existence must be always in the first instance an ordering of three first powers recognised by Indian thought. The claim of the natural functionings must be recognised in it to the full; the pursuit of personal and communal interest and the satisfaction of human desires as of human needs must be amply admitted and there must be an understanding combination of knowledge and labour towards these ends. But all must be controlled, uplifted and widened to greater aims by the ideal of the Dharma. And if, as India believes, there is a higher spiritual con-

sciousness towards which man can rise, that ascent must be kept throughout in view as the supreme goal of life. The system of Indian culture at once indulged and controlled man's nature; it fitted him for his social role; it stamped on his mind the generous ideal of an accomplished humanity refined, harmonised in all its capacities, ennobled in all its members; but it placed before him too the theory and practice of a highest change, familiarised him with the conception of a spiritual existence and sowed in him a hunger for the divine and the infinite. The symbols of his religion were filled with suggestions which led towards it; at every step he was reminded of lives behind and in front and of worlds beyond the material existence; he was brought close to the nearness, even to the call and pressure of the Spirit that is greater than the life it informs, of the final goal, of a high possible immortality, freedom, God-consciousness, divine Nature. Man was not allowed to forget that he had in him a highest self beyond his little personal ego and that always he and all things live, move and have their being in God, in the Eternal, in the Spirit. There were ways and disciplines provided in number by which he could realise this liberating truth or could at least turn and follow at a distance this highest aim according to his capacity and nature, *adhikāra*. Around him he saw and revered the powerful practicants and mighty masters of these disciplines.

These men were in early times the teachers of his youth, the summits of his society, the inspirers and fountain-heads of his civilisation, the great lights of his culture. Spiritual freedom, spiritual perfection were not figured as a far-off intangible ideal, but presented as the highest human aim towards which all must grow in the end and were made near and possible to his endeavour from a first practicable basis of life and the Dharma. The spiritual idea governed, enlightened and gathered towards itself all the other life-motives of a great civilised people.

# TOWARDS THE SPIRIT

Towards the spirit if not all the way to it man must rise or he misses his upward curve of strength; but there are different ways of approach to its secret forces. Europe, it would seem, must go through the life and the reason and find spiritual truth by their means as a crown and a revelation; she cannot at once take the kingdom of heaven by violence, as the saying of Christ would have men do. The attempt confuses and obscures her reason, is combated by her life instincts and leads to revolt, negation, a return to her own law of nature. But Asia, or at any rate, India lives naturally by a spiritual influx from above; that alone brings with it a spiritual evocation of her higher powers of mind and life. The two continents are the two sides of the integral orb of humanity and until they meet and fuse, each must move to whatever progress or culmination the spirit in humanity seeks, by the law of its being, its own proper Dharma. A one-sided world would have been the poorer for its uniformity and the monotone of a single culture; there is a need of divergent lines of advance until we can raise our heads into that infinity of the spirit in which there is a light broad enough to draw together and reconcile all highest ways of thinking, feeling and living.

Here is a philosophy which founds itself on the immediate reality of the Infinite, the pressing claim of the Absolute. And this is not as a thing to speculate about, but as a real Presence and a constant Power which demands the soul of man and calls it. Here is a mentality which sees the Divine in Nature and man and animal and inanimate thing, God at the beginning, God in the middle, God at the end, God everywhere. And all this is not a permissible poetical play of the imagination that need not be taken too seriously by life, but is put forward as a thing to be lived, realised, put at the back even of outward action, turned into stuff of thought, feeling and conduct! And whole disciplines are systematised for this purpose, disciplines which men still practise! And whole lives are given up to this pursuit of the supreme Person, the universal Godhead, the One, the Absolute, the Infinite! And to pursue this immaterial aim men are still content to abandon the outward life and society and home and family and their most cherished pursuits and all that has to a rational mind a substantial and ascertainable value! Here is a country which is still heavily coloured with the ochre tint of the garb of the Sannyasin, where the Beyond is still preached as

a truth and men have a living belief in other worlds and reincarnation and a whole army of antique ideas whose truth is quite unverifiable by the instruments of physical Science. Here the experiences of Yoga are held to be as true or more true than the experiments of the laboratory.

## ON HINDUISM

The rites, ceremonies, system of cult and worship of Hinduism can only be understood if we remember its fundamental character. It is in the first place a non-dogmatic inclusive religion and would have taken even Islam and Chiristianity into itself, if they had tolerated the process. All that it has met on its way it has taken into itself, content if it could put its forms into some valid relation with the truth of the supra-physical worlds and the truth of the Infinite. Again, it has always known in its heart that religion, if it is to be a reality for the mass of men and not only for a few saints and thinkers, must address its appeal to the whole of our being, not only to the suprarational and the rational parts,

but to all the others. The imagination, the emotions, the aesthetic sense, even the very instincts of the half-subconscient parts must be taken into the influence. Religion must lead man towards the suprarational, the spiritual truth and it must take the aid of the illumined reason on the way, but it cannot afford to neglect to call Godwards the rest of our complex nature. And it must take too each man where he stands and spiritualise him through what he can feel and not at once force on him something which he cannot yet grasp as a true and living power.

India has lived and lived richly, splendidly, greatly, but with a different will in life from Europe. The idea and plan of her life have been peculiar to her temperament, original and unique. Her values are not easy to seize for an outsider and her highest things are easily open to hostile misrepresentation by the ignorant, precisely because they are too high for the normal untrained mind and apt to shoot beyond its limits.

# TODAY AND TOMORROW

## FAITH, SINCERITY AND SURRENDER

To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together—the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven. Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, Ananda of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces.

Let your sincerity and surrender be genuine and entire. When you give yourself, give completely, without demand, without condition, without reservation so that all in you shall belong to the Divine Mother and nothing be left to the ego or given to any other power.

The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible.

—*Sri Aurobindo*

## THE MOTHER ANSWERS

*Can one with one's goodwill help the world?*

With goodwill one can change many things, only it must be a consummately pure and unmixed goodwill. But it is quite evident that perfectly pure and true thought or prayer, if it is thrown upon the world does its work. But where is this perfectly pure and true thought when it passes into the human brain. There are degradations. If you can in yourself, by an effort of the inner consciousness and knowledge, surmount, that is to say, dissolve and abolish truly a desire, and you are able, by means of an inner goodwill, by means of your consciousness and light and knowledge, to dissolve the desire, you will be first of all for yourself, personally, hundred times more happy than if you had satisfied the desire. And then it will have a wonderful effect. It will have such a repercussion in the world, you have

no idea. It will spread. Because the vibrations you have created will continue to spread. They are things that enlarge themselves like snowballs. A victory, however small it may be, that you win in your character is a victory which can then be won in the whole world. And that is what I wanted to say just now: all the things that are done externally without changing the inner nature—hospitals, schools etc.—are done through vanity, through the feeling of being great, while small obscure things conquered in oneself bring an infinitely greater victory, although the effects may be hidden. Each movement in you that is false and contrary to the truth is a negation of the divine life. Your small efforts have considerable effects, which you do not even have the satisfaction of knowing, but which are true and precisely produce an impersonal and general result.

If you want truly to do something good, the best thing to do is to win your little victories in all sincerity, one after another, and in this way you will do for the world the maximum of which you are capable.

*Will our victory act for the whole world?*

It will not change everybody. For your victory is too small to include everybody. Millions are needed. It is just a small victory if it is compared to the whole. But it mixes up with other things.

You could say that it is like winning in the world the capacity of doing a certain thing; but for its action

to become effective, sometimes centuries are needed. It is a question of proportions. You may carry on the experiment with the people around you. You must be altogether sincere, you must not do the thing with the idea of securing a particular result, but simply because you want to gain a victory. If you gain the victory, it will necessarily have an effect upon the people around you. But if there is even one commercial element, if you do such a thing in order to get such a result: "I want to conquer my defects, but that person also should conquer his," that will not do. It is the attitude of the business-man, "I give this, but I will take that." That spoils all. There is neither purity, nor sincerity. It is bargaining.

Nothing must come and mix with your sincerity, with your aspiration, with your motive. You do a thing for the love of the Divine, for the truth, for the perfection, without any other motive, any other idea. And that produces results.

# LEARNING FROM CRITICISM

In this world one starts with ignorance and imperfection in whatever one does—one has to find out one's mistakes and to learn, one has to commit errors and find out by correcting them the right way to do things. Nobody in this world has ever escaped from this law. So what one has to expect from others is not compliments all the time, but praise of what is right or well done and criticism of errors and mistakes. The more one can bear criticism and see one's mistakes, the more likely one is to arrive at the fullness of one's capacity. Especially when one is very young – before the age of maturity—one cannot easily do perfect work.

As for comparison with others, one ought not to do that. Each one has his own lesson to learn, his own work to do and he must concern himself with that, not with the superior or inferior progress of others in comparison with himself. If he is behind today, he can be in full capacity hereafter and it is for that future perfection of his powers that he must labour.

... learn to welcome criticism and the pointing out of imperfections—the more you do so, the more rapidly you will advance.

*—Sri Aurobindo*

# STRENGTH

The deeper we look, the more we shall be convinced that the one thing wanting, which we must strive to acquire before all others, is strength—strength physical, strength mental, strength moral, but above all strength spiritual which is the one inexhaustible and imperishable source of all the others. If we have strength everything else will be added to us easily and naturally. In the absence of strength we are like men in a dream who have hands but cannot seize or strike, who have feet but cannot run.

... If India is to survive she must be made young again. Rushing and billowing streams of energy must be poured into her; her soul must become, as it was in the old times, like the surges, vast, puissant, calm or turbulent at will, an ocean of action of force.

*—Sri Aurobindo*